

(Washington, DC)— Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisc.) today announced that the Sojourner Family Peace Center will receive a \$200,000 grant to launch the Milwaukee Family Justice Center. The partnership between the Sojourner Family Peace Center and the newly-created Milwaukee Family Justice Center will create a more unified continuum of services for victims of domestic violence in Milwaukee.

Currently, Sojourner provides criminal and legal advocacy, emergency shelter, case management services and access to resources. Sojourner Family Peace Center operates a 37-bed shelter that provides safety and support services to thousands of women and children, as well as a 24-hour Domestic Violence hotline. The Milwaukee Family Justice Center will be a central location that will allow providers to come together with the Sojourner Family Peace Center to provide services that are designed to empower victims of domestic violence by enhancing their self-esteem and promoting independence.

“The additional services that the Milwaukee Family Justice Center will be able to provide with this grant will help Milwaukee tackle the problem of domestic violence at its core, and stamp out the seeds of abuse,” Congresswoman Moore said. “Victims of domestic violence need to understand that physical and emotional abuse simply cannot be tolerated -- and they need the courage to get out of a negative situation before it becomes untenable. In addition to providing all of the critical services that Sojourner Family Peace Center already offers, such as legal advocacy and emergency shelter, we also have to help victims gain the strength to take control of their lives.”

It has long been a goal of the Sojourner Family Peace Center to create a one-stop location for clients needing services. This grant will also help pay for a director for the Milwaukee Family Justice Center and an assistant position to help get the center up and running.

“We are very grateful for this award,” said Angela Mancuso, co-executive director of the Sojourner Family Peace Center. “These funds will allow us to unify our services for survivors of domestic violence, abused children and children exposed to violence in our community. One location, in which partners and providers can come together, where survivors can access many of the services they need to heal, will make life easier for those who are hurting in our community.”

According to the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Wisconsin domestic abuse programs provided services to 28,655 women, 8,915 children and 3,103 men in 2007. In Milwaukee alone, a total of 7,656 people were served that year.

Moore's Work on Domestic Violence Issues

- Earlier this month, Congresswoman Moore announced that Legal Action of Wisconsin will be able to work with partner organizations to create the Exceptional Needs Victims' Legal Assistance Program, which will reach out to domestic violence victims in Milwaukee with more far-ranging needs. These needs might include limited English proficiency, disabilities, or an income that is less than 200% of the federal poverty level. This project will create two full time attorney positions and one paralegal position.
- Early in September, Congresswoman Moore introduced a bipartisan House resolution to commemorate the fourth annual Milwaukee Bride's Walk, which she participated in September 13, to promote awareness of domestic violence issues in the Latino community and to honor those victims whose lives have been cut short as a result of domestic violence. The Bride's Walk began in New York more than eight years ago in memory of Gladys Ricart, who was brutally murdered by an abusive ex-boyfriend on her wedding day as she was handing a floral bouquets to her maid of honor.
- Also this month, Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisc.) announced that Asha Family Services Inc in Milwaukee would receive \$250,000 to provide housing assistance to the victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. These funds are intended for victims who are homeless, in need of transitional housing or other housing assistance, and for whom emergency shelter services and other crisis intervention services are unavailable or insufficient.
- In June, the United States House of Representatives passed an amendment that Congresswoman Moore offered to increase funding for legal assistance to victims of domestic violence. The amendment would add \$4 million to the Civil Legal Assistance Program, which provides legal representation for domestic violence victims so they are able to obtain restraining orders, win custody of their children, and navigate the complex and expensive criminal justice system. The amendment was included in the House-passed Fiscal Year 2010 Commerce, Science, Justice Appropriations Act. That bill is currently pending in the Senate.
- Congresswoman Moore secured \$100,000 in the Labor-HHS appropriations bill that passed in

the House earlier this year for the Latina Resource Center's work in teen pregnancy and STD prevention, as well as healthy teen relationships free of emotional and physical abuse. This bill is now pending in the Senate. Of all the domestic violence advocates in the area, the Latina Resource Center is the only supportive services center in Milwaukee that specifically targets Hispanic women.

- Congresswoman Moore is currently working on legislation to reauthorize the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA). This bill is responsible for funding domestic violence shelters to keep their lights on and their doors open. It was last updated in 2003, and it is sorely in need of more current funding mechanisms and reporting requirements so the federal government can streamline the dollars it sends to local groups that are doing work on the ground. The bill will also expand the types of services these groups can offer in order to reach a broader constituency.

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